

 The Anglican Digest

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**THE ANGLICAN DIGEST**

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## *Advent Greetings*

It takes self-discipline to keep the Advent season. The commercial and secular forces that pressure us to celebrate Christmas in Advent can be distracting. We live with other Christian communities that do not keep an Advent season as a time of spiritual preparation to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, who get caught up in celebrating Christmas. We, as Episcopalians, must be in the world, but not of the world. Let us keep Advent in the spirit in which it is meant to be kept, in the ancient spirituality of the one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We are to set our minds on the awesome event of the Incarnation of the Word of God in the human nature of the child born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Quiet joy is what one experiences when we ponder in our heart God's love for us in coming into our world as one of us, as **Emmanuel**, God with us. We are called in Advent to "cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of

light, now in the time of this mortal life in which our Lord Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility . . ." (From the collect for The First Sunday of Advent). That is a poetic way of saying that we are to examine our lives and cast aside by repentance those things in our lives that exclude the Lord from the central place. It is a season to offer ourselves anew to God and to wait quietly for the coming of our Lord.

To our preparation, we add prayers for all sorts and conditions of men and women in this world so filled with violence, sorrow, and despair. We should, in this season of giving and thanksgiving, help to meet the needs of others less fortunate than ourselves by supporting local social service agencies. We can also help in these programs by serving and giving our time.

Let us come together in the Sundays during Advent and prepare to celebrate the God of Love and Prince of Peace, who came, is coming still, and will come again.

— The Rev. Tom Staup,  
Catoctin Episcopal Parish,  
Thurmont, Maryland

## Advent Refreshment

*"You have lost your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen; repent, and do the things you did at first"* (Revelation 2:4b-5).

As I purposefully make my way through the aisles of busy shoppers, thinking about my list, I am a man on a mission. I want to be able to get in and out of this store as quickly as possible. I want to buy what I need to buy so that I can cross that task off my list and move on to the next obligation. I don't have time to dawdle. I want to get in and out — quickly!

I am concentrating on scanning the shelves for exactly what I want. "Please help me find the right color and size, soon." But God does not answer my prayer with the speed I would like. Instead, my ear picks up the lyrics of the carol playing over the speaker system. "How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven."<sup>1</sup>

In that moment I am struck

by how out of sync I am with the wonder and anticipation of the coming Christmas season. There has been no Advent watching and waiting on my part, only a busier than normal season of regular activities with holiday obligations added to an already full schedule. God wants me to pay attention to something far more important than my shopping list. God wants me to pay attention to the state of my heart.

If we would make the time, Advent can be a season of refreshment where we discover again the great love God has for us. Notice the passion with which Thomas Comber, writing in the 17th century, adores his Lord at Christmas: "O my Soul, Summon all thy powers to admire and worship; for all is Miracle and the height of wonder. The Maker of all is made himself, an infinite Majesty is shrunk into the dimension of a span; The Word is made Flesh and God becomes Man yet remains God still. All hail, sweetest Savior, how lovely is thy con-

descension, how honorable thy abasement? Thou has more splendor in the rags of thy humility than all the grandeurs of this world could give thee; thou are more a king because thou wouldest be like a slave for our sakes, and conquer our hearts by thy stupendous Love and unparalleled self-denial!"<sup>1</sup>

Let us do what we can in this Advent season to be refreshed by God's love. Let us not lose "our first love," but let us do what is necessary to keep that love aflame. For God, the passion of our love for him is far more important than anything we may do.

#### (Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> "O Little town of Bethlehem," lyrics by Phillips Brooks.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Comber, "A Meditation for the communion at Christmas," quoted in *Prayer Book Spirituality*; edited by J. Robert Wright, New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1989.

— The Rev. Greg Brewer,  
Good Samaritan,  
Paoli, Pennsylvania

## Christian Faith

With the beginning of Advent, we have come again to a new Christian year. The arrival of Advent presents us with unique opportunities to witness the meaning of Christian faith. There is no time of the year in which the church is more at variance with the culture than during Advent.

Since we are all part of the culture in which we live, there are many Episcopalians who take the attitude, "What's the big deal? Why not go along with what is happening all round us and celebrate Christmas from Thanksgiving until the 25th?" After all, they reason, there is nothing biblical that prohibits us from celebrating Christmas throughout December and it certainly is not a moral issue.

Why indeed do we keep Advent as a season distinct from Christmas? I believe there are several excellent reasons to keep this wonderful season in our homes as well as in church. They are:

1. To keep Advent requires us to take some time to examine our lives, to reassess priorities, to make needed changes, and to confess our sins. This is the best way not only to prepare to celebrate the birth of the Redeemer, but also to prepare for his coming at the end of time.
2. Advent is the only time in the church year when we deal extensively with the Christian hope that "Christ will come again." To jump right into Christmas is to miss entering into this particular aspect of our faith.
3. Advent devotional material is among the most beautiful of any in our tradition. The prayers, scripture readings, and hymns of Advent should be well known and used by God's people.
4. The "disconnect" between cultural and church customs provides an opportunity to witness to our faith. "Why do you wait so long to decorate for Christ-
- mas?" invites us to talk about our beliefs that Jesus will come again to judge both the living and the dead as well as our belief that one needs to prepare in order properly to celebrate the great Feast of the Nativity.
5. Observing Advent, which is counter-cultural, makes us more intentional about what we are doing and requires us to think about why we are doing it. Such thinking about our faith is always good for our families and us.
6. Advent can help us to pull away from the materialism that overshadows the meaning of the Incarnation, God taking flesh in the man Jesus of Nazareth.
7. Keeping Advent will enable you to enter more fully into the richness of Christmas. When everyone else's holiday has ended on 25 December, your holy days go on until the 6th of January, the Feast of the Epiphany.

For this reason and many more I urge you to keep a holy Advent. There is a great spiritual benefit to be derived. The devotional material will give you a good start in observing this holy season. Your clergy are happy to spend time with you in helping you make the most of this spiritual opportunity. God bless you in this holy season and always.

— The Rev. Fred Robinson,  
Church of the Redeemer,  
Sarasota, Florida

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### *Bible*

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages. "Mama, look what I found," the boy called out. "What have you got there, dear?" With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, "I think it's Adam's underwear.

### *Still, Still, Still*

Maybe just the sight of that word stirs up some anger. For most this is such a busy time and there's no time to be still. Younger children are wired and demanding more time. Older children are back home for the holidays, filling up the house with all that comes with them. The end of the year approaches and there are business matters to close out, ones which may well determine the success or failure of the entire year. There are gifts to buy and deliver and get in the mail. Even when we think it's all done, we realize we've forgotten something. Someone told me yesterday, "The only thing about Christmas I really like is the midnight Christmas Eve service at St. John's. I wish everything else would just go away". For others the hubbub the rest of the world is going through is a reminder of the relative emptiness of their own lives. Anxiety and loneliness increase for many this time of the year. Our physical defenses are lowered and illnesses rise just about now. Even

when we're laid low, our minds and hearts are over-crowded.

Still. Still. Still. God beckons us to be still, to know his stillness, to quiet ourselves so that we may know the peace of his presence. As the pressure builds around us, within us, most of us find we are reacting to the circumstances, people, and feelings we encounter rather than observing them and responding appropriately. We react, often overreact, and then have to deal with the havoc we have wreaked ourselves. Something beyond our control has caused us to lose the little control we did have. Tightness rises in our chests, shoulders, necks, head, stomach, backs.

Still. Still. Still. Though we may have less time available, this is when we need our quiet time with God all the more. If any question requires our groundedness, this one does. The source of life and peace whispers to us to devote time each day to listening and appreciating God's presence. For most I recommend giving up talking to God for this time of year.

It's better to close our mouths and open our hearts. Sit in God's presence, quietly. Allow all the fear, frustration, anxiety, anger — whatever else you may feel — to pass on through. Stay quiet until it has gone by. It shouldn't take long, maybe twenty minutes or so. Don't try to make the feelings go away; just feel them and stay quiet until the feelings dissolve. There, at the end of that, is the still voice of God touching us and refreshing us. It's a practice that rewards the practitioner. The more we do it, the more we find in it. It's the same quiet presence that Mary and Joseph and the shepherds drew on that holy night long ago. It's the light of Christ being born in us.

The birth of Christ, the light of our Lord, the stillness of his peace, is available. Will you make yourself available to it? Or will you merely add your own chaos to that of the world around you? There is a higher way. *Be still and know that I am God* (Psalm 46:10).

— The Rev. Robert C. Wisnewski, Jr., St. John's, Montgomery, Alabama

## *The Annunciation*

Modern man "walks in darkness" (Isaiah) through a bleak world, struggling for "light" that is, hope. The Christian story can provide a foothold that is the same yesterday and today and forever. While the Old Testament narrative and the account of the birth and ministry of John the Baptist provide a backdrop that begs to be studied and understood, the greatest story ever told begins with "The Annunciation" – the angel's announcement to the Virgin Mary of the Incarnation.

The angel's name was Gabriel. The name Gabriel means "power." Too often we associate angels with the modernistic idea that these heavenly creatures are sweet little individuals "in evening dress with peroxide permanents or avant-garde hairdos" (Peter Marshall). Too bad we have a tendency to sentimentalize the notion of angels. The fact is, if an angel should meet us this evening in the majesty they hold in the Bible

we could not endure it calmly, but would react in fear. The angels were "mighty princes" in heaven, messengers of God.

Gabriel was commander-in-chief, "the keeper of the sword." God sent Gabriel to a young teenage virgin, a maiden named Mary. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." Nothing is said that Mary had found favor from God because of her virtuous character of spirituality. Like all of God's great servants in the Bible, nothing exceptional is said of her at all; she is simply chosen. We may infer that she understood this clearly, because she herself said in her song, "He has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden."

God might have gone to the great city of Jerusalem and picked out a fair Jewish maiden in upper religious or social circles. Maybe Caiaphas' daughter? But no, God preferred a lowly maiden from little Nazareth. (To bring this home to us, we

might just as well say Mary was from Frogmore, South Carolina.)

And what was she told? "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus" (Luke). ". . . for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew).

She wanted to know, "How shall this be? I have no husband." Gabriel replied, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the highest shall overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

Bishop Allison once said he believed graduate school and seminary had adequately prepared him theologically for ministry, but that he was not prepared emotionally for the amount of pain and sorrow in the lives of people. The world can be mighty bleak and dark. But "the people have seen a great light" (Isaiah). What is that light but the same star that led wise men to Bethlehem? Martin

Luther said, there is such richness and goodness in the Nativity that if we should see and deeply understand, we should be dissolved in perpetual joy."

Isaiah wrote: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (9:6). The point of emphasis belongs on the "us." For those who believe, it is a marvel in our eyes that God should take on human flesh and be placed in the lap of a lowly virgin, and that all our hope should lie in him. It is even a greater marvel that he would, for us, die on a cross.

Is there any wonder that we say it is the greatest story ever told? O come let us adore him!

May God fill you with all blessings and hope this Christmas season, and always.

—The Very Rev. Frank F. Limehouse, III  
Cathedral of The Advent  
Birmingham, Alabama



## *Christmas Hardware*

Ralph Stockman said, "The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable." The Incarnation of Jesus, his Nativity, has moved people throughout all of history, trickling upwards from the poor, broken, uneducated, and slave classes to emperors, scholars, and commercial captains. The message of angels has made its way through generations to us this year, calling us to come with wonder and an open heart to this "Word made flesh full of Grace and Truth."

Christ Jesus' birth is the fulcrum of history. We still continue to measure our time by it. It has been attributed to Archimedes that he said: "If one had a suitable fulcrum and a long enough lever, one could move the world." How can the world be moved, so filled with what we read and see in the news? Think of this past year - senseless terrorist acts, natural disasters and death, cynical attitudes toward most any

leadership. Our experience is so filled with darkness, helplessness, and indifference in dealing with the shadow side of human character in all of us. The God of the universe entering our world as a needy baby is beyond comprehension. Yet the Babe provides that stable point against which the lever of God's Grace can act and move the immovable.

Where is that fulcrum for our own lives? What can we trust enough in our relativistic, aging, and ever changing world that will be stable enough to allow us to be moved, to be transformed? One thing I am certain about is that none of us can provide that sure foundation, that fulcrum in ourselves. This reference point must be given to us; we must receive it. Rarely can most of us ignore a baby that wants attention. God wants our attention at Christmas even in the midst of busy, broken lives. He wants our faith and trust. The Lord of the Universe wants us to come and adore him.

"The Good News of great joy for all people" is that we can find in the Incarnation and Nativity this fulcrum that will enable God to move us from where we are to a place of worship, peace and the knowledge of God. "In Creation, the Lord made humanity like himself; but in the redemption he made himself like humanity." (John Boys) The Holy Family did not dwell on there being "no room in the inn" or the hardship of traveling to be taxed. Nor did they express dismay and surprise by saying: "Look what the world has come to!" but in delight proclaimed: "Look what has come into the world!"

heard and felt, seen and sensed all around you this Christmas drawing your faith and awe, your adoration, your praise.

— The Rev. Dr. Robert D. Nix, Jr., St. John's, Glyndon, Maryland



### *Elderly*

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly & shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. The various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs, unfailingly intrigued her. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

Jesus had come and is coming. One of my old teachers wrote: "The Son of God ... came to seek us where we are in order that he might bring us to be with him where he is." (J.I. Packer) Where are you this Advent and Christmas? May the Lord come to you and call you to come and be with him. May this ageless message be

*Thesis from a Seminary Door . . .*

## Anglican Without the Skin On

Now that our old church has left us, what does it mean to be Anglican? Now that the form is changing, what is left of the heart and essence? What does it mean to be Anglican without the comfortable and familiar wrapping?

This is my question. So here's a stab:

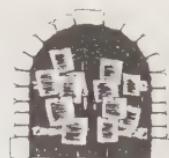
Anglican means the 1928 Prayer Book. Stated a little more deeply, Anglican means the incomparable liturgy that Thomas Cranmer and his friends put together in the 1540s and '50s, which is a unique and very precious treasure for the entire Christian Church. We have prayed with depth, with verticality in relation both to the human substratum of lostness and to the divine predicates of salvation. When you "church hop" these days, you almost always go back with gratitude to the profound legacy of the Prayer Book. And for us in this country,

that legacy usually means the 1928 Prayer Book.

Anglican means to be non-lecturing. An actual empirical quality that emerges when you are with traditional or orthodox Episcopalians, in contrast to orthodox members of other churches, is the fact that they just don't lecture you! When I am with other evangelicals, in particular, I often feel I am being talked down to. The mood is didactic.

Call it gentility, or an inherited live-and-let-live, Episcopalians are not in general going to lecture you. Don't you prefer this? Helps one think for oneself, God willing. Anglican is not rah-rah. Church as pep rally we are not.

Anglican means to be core and not penultimate. Although the Episcopal Church has gone overboard in saying that almost nothing, or very little, is core anymore - the core is too small,



in other words, and therefore un-catholic in the broad sense of that word – we do have a tradition of riding easy on secondary matters. It really is possible (despite what we have been told since 1979) to be a kosher Anglican and have Morning Prayer as the principal service most Sunday mornings and wear a cassock, surplice, and tippet. It is also possible to be a kosher Anglican and enjoy “full catholic privileges” during the mass. This should not be disputed. We have, in fact, aspired to be a comprehensive church. Just because “TEC” no longer allows traditional Episcopalians to be themselves doesn’t mean that wide latitude in secondary matters is not important. It is just that the core of “what is everywhere to be believed” has been shrunk to way too little.

I think Anglican means to be like the character of Dean Harcourt in Lloyd Douglas’ forgotten “Anglican” classic *The Green Light* (1934). Dean Harcourt is cathedral dean in a mid-western city, whose ‘behind-the-scenes’ counse-

ing ministry ends up changing every other character’s life for the better. (Sir Cedric Hardwicke played the Dean, who in the book is also crippled, in the 1937 Hollywood movie of the book.) What Dean Harcourt displays in that inspiring novel is a sort of wise and changeless pastoral presence which is as God-centered and transcendent as it is Christ-centered and saving.

This was, and hopefully is, true Anglicanism: as vertical as God is above all things and creatures and as profound as Christ came to save all men and all women.

— The Very Rev. Dr.theol.  
Paul F.M. Zahl,  
Dean/President, Trinity  
Episcopal School for  
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What we call holy in the world – a person, a place, words, or a work of art – is so because the foreign is brought together with the familiar and the everyday. No one embodies this holiness more than Mary, who makes a home for the Creator of all things in her own body, and in her own house.

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## Virgin Birth – A Necessary Part of Our Faith?

This question is particularly pertinent at Christmas when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. When we attend our Christmas Eucharist we will say the words: "and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." Will we be able to say these words and mean them, or is this a part of the Creed that we sit lightly on? To put the question another way, is belief in the virgin birth a necessary part of our faith?

starting point of our faith is the Easter event.

Yet the teaching of the Church about the virgin birth was clearly part of the tradition from the earliest days. It can only be described as a divine mystery. God relates to the created order in ways that we only partly understand. When God's Spirit comes upon us we are transformed. Sometimes are wonderfully healed from illness. Often other amazing things happen when we are in communion with God.

There have been a number of faithful Christians and Church leaders who have suggested that the virgin birth is not a necessary part of our faith. Strictly speaking they are correct in the sense that our belief about Jesus is not dependent on the virgin birth but on the resurrection. The basis of the apostolic preaching was Christ's resurrection – the birth of Jesus does not rate a mention in the Acts of the Apostles. The



The encounter of our Lady with the angel Gabriel was one of those amazing instances when God touched the world in a very special way. God was not going against the laws of nature, yet God acted with the natural order in a way that was related to the wonderful response of Mary. God called Mary to be the instrument of the coming of the Anointed One (the Christ).

When Mary responded, she was powerfully touched by God and the second person of the Blessed Trinity was conceived in human form in her womb.

The virgin birth is a part of our faith we receive with joy and wonder. We do not need to try and analyse it too closely. God has acted and came among us uniquely in the person of Jesus. Equally wonderfully and mysteriously God continues to come to us under the forms of bread and wine when we receive the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion. What

truly matters is that we, with the blessed Virgin, enter into communion and fellowship with God who longs for us to share his love and life.

I wish all who read this a truly holy and life-transforming Christmas.

— The Rt. Rev. David McCall, Bishop of Bunbury, Western Australia,  
via *The Messenger*

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## *Incorrect Ways to Think About Jesus*

I'm embarrassed about how many years I thought of our Lord along the lines of what Robert Capon called a "mild-mannered Clark Kent with souped up insides." For too long I believed him to be a human being, but with something along the lines of a divine mind: a very special human being at most. As I look back on those days, I can begin to realize why I had so much trouble rationalizing how Jesus' death ever saved me from my sins.

What possible connection could there be between this extraordinary man's death, and God's absolution of my sin? Unfortunately, with an incorrect conception of our Lord, no explanation of his Atonement no matter how succinctly put could satisfy my curiosity about how God could forgive my sin. That is, I had held a heretical understanding of the Person of our Lord, which theolo-

gians have called "adoptionism."

As I got older and supposedly more sophisticated, my appreciation of the Incarnate Word began to change. For some reason it was now easier for me to think of Jesus as God inhabiting the body of a human — or to be more precise, God appearing like a human. Since God is "that which nothing greater than can be conceived," why would he not choose to come to our earthly home to teach us how to live. After all he is God, and he can do what he wants to do. He doesn't actually need to become us; instead he can just appear to be like us. And yet, this supposedly higher understanding of Jesus' person still failed to help me understand how his death could affect my sin. IF Jesus is God appearing as a human being, then he really couldn't have died because no one can kill God. Thus sometime during my time in seminary I learned that this other incorrect and heretical way

of thinking about our Lord is called "Docetism."

The adoptionist heresy stems from the idea that Jesus was so good and lived such a perfect life solely as a human being, that God "adopted" him as his Son. Adoptionists believe that the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them as a reward for doing such an outstanding job of following in Jesus' footsteps. And yet, such a mindset can only lead to pride or despair. One can either congratulate himself for a "job well-done" (ignoring Jesus' words about when we've managed to do all, we should still consider ourselves unfaithful servants as we've only done our duty), or one can despair about the impossibility of ever living up to Jesus' standard. The only "good news" for a died-in-the-wool adoptionist is: "Simply try harder"; as such the adoptionist has no concept of God's salvation being a free gift.

The heresy called docetism stems from the Greek word which means "to appear

like", thus the docetic understanding of Jesus as God appearing like a man. Docetists are a sub-category of the heresy called Gnosticism which believed that the spiritual world was good and the material world was evil – and since God was spirit and therefore good, he would never choose to take upon him our flesh. Salvation comes not by Jesus dying on the Cross but by one's spiritual "knowledge" (the English translation of the Greek word *gnosis*).

Much of our Church's current unrest stems from docetic Gnosticism. If one believes with the proper knowledge that his spirit is saved, then it really doesn't matter what he does with his flesh because the flesh is evil anyway and therefore unimportant. Further, as Jesus was not truly human he could not possibly die on the Cross. Therefore we have no moral compulsion to follow him. Docetic Gnostics follow the old beer commercial which exhorts us to "grab for all the

gusto we can out of life," paying no attention to the moral dimension of Christianity.

Docetists generally consider themselves to be very "spiritually minded" which is fine up to a point. As Jesus' death (to them) was not truly a death but an escape from reality, docetists very often avoid the nitty-gritty of life. They fail to appreciate how God in Jesus identifies himself with all human suffering. Quite often, drug users as well as suicides stem from a docetic understanding to escape from life.

The orthodox (from the Greek meaning "right thinking") understanding of our Lord's person is expressed in article II of the Articles of Religion: ". . . that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead,

and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

In the womb of Mary, the divine Word of God assumed our human nature, that is, he took our human nature unto himself. He is Son of God and Son of Man. Thus his death on the Cross — with which we are united in baptism — becomes a saving act for the human race. His death is necessary and real, because human sin is all too real. A price had to be paid, and at Christmas God assumes our nature in order to pay that price. As Jesus is fully human, his death can atone for our sins — and as he is also God, through that death we can be reconciled to God.

The Rt. Rev. C. Fitzsimmons Allison, retired Bishop of South Carolina, in his book *The Cruelty of Heresy*, offers examples of adoptionist and docetic theology from

Christian hymnody. See if you can guess which is which:

*Cast your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful  
face.  
For the things on earth will  
grow strangely dim  
In the Light of His Glory and  
Grace.*

[Hint, Bishop Allison writes that this "sounds as if we're vaporizing ourselves!"]

Or the other extreme:

*Let there be peace on earth,  
And let it begin with me!*

At Christmas we sing of the one and only correct way to think about the Incarnation:

*Then let us all with one  
accord,  
Sing praises to our Heavenly  
Lord –  
Who hath made Heaven and  
Earth of nought,  
And with His blood mankind  
hath bought.*  
– (The First Nowell)

*Veiled in the flesh the God-  
head see,  
Hail the incarnate Deity.  
Pleased as man with man to  
dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels  
sing . . .*

– (Charles Wesley)

– The Rev. Frederick A. Buechner, All Saints', Thomasville, Georgia



## *Help Us Spread the Word*

If you find an article in your reading, which you think worthy of a wider audience, please send it to TAD with a note telling where you found it. Mail items to Managing Editor, THE ANGLICAN DIGEST, 805 CR 102, Eureka Springs, AR 72632.

and . . .



*Author of all majesty, how bright is Thy glory upon the land of Oregon? Blessed be the trees upon their hills, the valleys in their verdure, and the dry places waiting their turn of fertility.*

*Praise be to Thee for the precious gift of rain: Drawn into heaven from the sea, caught again upon the snowy peaks, returning fruitfully down the strong rivers giving life to Thy people in their orchards and city places. May their lives be likewise lifted to Thee, and blessed and sent again to do Thy service upon the earth.*

*So may the land be renewed, and the souls of Thy servants; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
*Amen.*

*The God of All Eternity*

The God of all eternity,  
Unbound by space yet always near,  
Is present where his people meet  
To celebrate the coming year.

What shall we offer God today —  
Our dreams of what we can not see,  
Or, with eyes fastened to the past,  
Our dread of what is yet to be?

God does not share our doubts and fears,  
Nor shrinks from the unknown or strange:  
The One who fashioned heav'n and earth  
Makes all things new and ushers change.

Let faith or fortune rise or fall,  
Let dreams and dread both have their day:  
Those whom God loves walk unafraid  
With Christ their guide and Christ their way.  
God grant that we, in this new year,  
May show the world the Kingdom's face,  
And let our work and worship thrive  
As signs of hope and means of grace.

— John L. Bell,  
Iona Community

## About the Hymn

The poem is in fact a hymn, found in the *Gather Hymnal* (page 894). It comes by way of the Iona Community in Scotland.

Hymnody is a part of the Church's tradition; as Anglicans we are mindful that it shapes our approach to theology along with scripture and reason. Most of us like hymns that are easy to sing: for some that means a preference for "contemporary" hymns while for others that means a preference for all things up to Mozart but not beyond! So it goes at St. Francis Episcopal Church . . .

But hymns are by definition not only about the melody that is sung. They are also literary creations. They are poems, and as such (like the Psalms in the Bible) they speak in ways that left-brain doctrine cannot speak, about the God who is beyond our knowing. They point us toward the Incarnate Word whom we comprehend, as T.S. Eliot once said, only by "hints and guesses."

This poem reminds us that

most of us lack the imagination to dream of the Kingdom of God because our dreams (and our nightmares!) are confined by the past. And "with eyes fastened to the past" we find ourselves dreading "what is yet to be."

Yet it is in this month that we remember a Baptist preacher with a dream: in spite of the history of slavery and racism it is a dream of a new day, a day when people will be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. God, the poets suggest, is making all things new. God is fashioning a new creation through the baptized, and fashioning anew heavens and a new earth. That work is about change . . .

Ah, that dreaded word to so many people of faith! *Change*. Do you know the one about how many Episcopalians it takes to change a light bulb? "*Change . . . change . . . we can't change that light bulb: my grandmother donated that light bulb to the church!*" (Spoken in a highly anxious and frenetic tone!)

We live in such a fast-paced society, a world that is chang-

ing faster than we can take in, that we long for the Church to be a place that doesn't change at all — a steady anchor among the raging storm. I am sensitive to that perspective and experience those emotions myself. But it needs to be named as a form of idolatry. A Church that will not change is destined to become a museum, not a living organic Body. A Church that fears change cannot serve the One who comes not only as Creator and Redeemer but as a "rush of wind" and with "tongues of fire." Bell dares to name it just that way: the God we worship "makes all things new and ushers change."

God is making all things new. And if we really believe that then we dare to walk with Christ as our guide and our way — unafraid. We dare to move toward the Kingdom, rather than trying to recapture some past golden age. In so doing we show the world, as Bell puts it so well, "the kingdom's face."

— The Rev. Dr. Richard Simpson, St. Francis, Holden, Massachusetts

## Guest Quarters at HILLSPEAK



Whether seeking the serenity of an Ozark mountain retreat, searching shelves in Operation Pass Along, or doing research in the Foland Library, Hillspeak's guest quarters are ideal. Scenic vistas from atop Grindstone Mountain and the proximity of Eureka Springs draw visitors from around the world. Each unit accommodates at least four people with a fully equipped kitchen. See them online at [anglicandigest.org](http://anglicandigest.org) or call for more information or to make reservations. Linens are supplied but no maid service. Plan to spend some time with us.

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## *The King Who Came to Visit*

Once upon a time the most Glorious King who ever lived went to visit his Kingdom: all the hamlets and villages, all the cities and towns, all the highways and byways. Of course, he rode in his most regal coach, in his most resplendent robes, with his most gorgeous crown upon his head.

Everywhere he went huge crowds gathered and cheered, "long live the King!" And each time he stopped, all the important people stepped up to greet him. But the butchers and bakers and housewives and teachers, and all the children hung back as if they were afraid of him. This troubled the King.

One day, in the farthest corner of the Kingdom, a beautiful young girl had come to the well to draw water for her flocks. When the King saw her his heart leapt for

joy! Just by looking at her he could tell she was the girl he wanted to marry, the girl he had been waiting for all his life. He started to get out of the coach, to ask her to be his bride, and come live with him in the Palace forever. But then he remembered how all the other humble people had reacted to him, and he drove on.

Back at the Palace the King asked the advice of all his royal counselors. One said he should have simply swept the girl off her feet with his magnificence. Another suggested he demand she marry him. After all, he was the King; how could she refuse? A third said he should send presents, one after another, until he had bought her love. And still another said he should send all the young men in her village off to war, until there was no one left for her to marry but the King himself.

Finally he dismissed them all. The King called in his lowliest servant, and "I will

give you one of my royal robes if you will give me some of your old clothes." The servant said, "Yes, of course!" and the exchange was made. The King put on the ragged clothes, and went on foot to become a carpenter in her village.

He said to himself, "If I presented myself to her as a King it would have scared her. If I had demanded she marry me, she would have obeyed, but it wouldn't be love. If I tried to buy her affection it would have been for all the wrong reasons. And if I were the only choice she had it wouldn't really be a choice at all. I'm going to win her heart by becoming like her, and then showering her with my love."

And he did. A Blessed Christmas to you and yours.

— The Rt. Rev. John  
W. Howe, via  
*The Central Florida  
Episcopalian*

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## *Romans' Resolutions*

January first is traditionally a time for making New Year's Resolutions, perhaps better called "New Year's Good Intentions" if most of us are honest about it. My usual list always seems to involve some sort of atonement for dietary excesses during December along with a renewed commitment to exercise, a balance between work and rest and recreation, and a general pledge to live out my faith more fully. I always mean well and I usually succeed to some degree, at least for a while, before old habits awaken from their winter hibernation and begin to prowl.

This year I expect to commit to the usual list (they are all good things to strive for), but after a recent reading of a passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans I have decided to supplement my list of resolutions with some advice from Paul. In the twelfth chapter of that letter, verses nine through eighteen, he offers twenty-two suggestions for living that some

scholars have called "Paul's Beatitudes." I like to think of them as his "Romans' Resolutions for Christian Living." Why not try some (or all) of them in the New Year?

**Let love be genuine:** Love honestly, Love the way God, who is the source of true love, loves — unconditionally.

**Hate what is evil:** Don't make peace with evil or with anything that draws you away from God.

**Hold fast to what is good:** Wrap your heart, your mind, and your life around God and the things God wants for you and for all people.

**Love one another with true affection:** Take the "Human Family" thing seriously. Love others like they are family — in the very best sense of family.

**Outdo one another in showing honor:** Be as concerned about being honest and just as about winning, succeeding, or prospering.

**Never flag in zeal:** Be as passionate about your relationship with God as you are about your career or your prosperity (remembering that your relationship with God will last far longer than your career or your prosperity!)

**Be aglow with the Spirit:** Let God illuminate your life, and through it the lives around you.

**Serve the Lord:** Paradoxically this is the pathway to true freedom. (To what are you currently enslaved? Is it saving you?)

**Rejoice in your hope:** Celebrate God's Love for you as much as a pay raise, or a bonus, or a successful deal, or a victory by your favorite team, or any other triumph in your life.

**Be patient in tribulation:** Hold onto God like you would hold onto a life-line in a flood.

**Be constant in prayer:** Pray like breathing. Pray when you don't need to. Talk to

God like you talk with someone you are madly in love with. Listen to God like you listen to your most trusted advisor.

**Contribute to the needs of the saints:** Be generous to the poor and to the community of faith.

**Practice hospitality:** Make others feel welcome in your heart.

**Bless those who persecute you:** A tough one. Pray for all those with whom you struggle. Don't pray for outcomes. Pray for healing.

**Rejoice with those who rejoice:** Be glad for the good fortune of others regardless of the current status of your own fortune.

**Weep with those who weep:** There's a lot of weeping going on out there in the world. Don't pretend otherwise. Believe that you will actually feel better when they feel better too. Do something to help.

**Live in harmony with one**

**another:** Trying especially hard with those with whom you differ or disagree. (It's a God in Christ kind of thing.)

**Do not be haughty:** Try to think of yourself as God thinks of you — beloved, no better than any of his other children, and worth dying for.

**Associate with the lowly:** You never know how angels might disguise themselves.

**Don't be conceited:** Be more concerned with asking good questions than with having all the answers.

**Do not repay evil with evil:** As someone once said this only doubles the amount of evil in the world. Try increasing the amount of good instead.

**Live peaceably with all:** Including yourself.

May God bless you one and all in the New Year.

— The Rev. James L. Burns,  
Church of the Heavenly  
Rest, New York, New York



## HILLSPEAKING

DEER, it would seem, have become a problem nationwide. As their numbers increase, their natural timidity decreases, so that it is not uncommon across the country to see them browsing in suburban, and even urban, areas. So it is at Hillspeak, although we do not consider them a problem, but rather something of an attractive nuisance.

They exasperated Patient Wife by nibbling on her roses and dictated that we should plant daffodils at St Mark's Cemetery rather than tulips.

The Managing Editor moved his tomato plants closer to his house, the Old Residence, but cannot do much about their feasting on still-ripening peaches and apples. He observed a doe tilt a birdfeeder to one side so the sunflower seeds flowed easily into her open mouth. I have a birdbath at the back of the Cottage that is drained



each night by does and bucks. Still and all, we have a live-and-let-live policy toward them.

Even Godfrey has adopted the policy and makes only a perfunctory effort at chasing them off.

Late last spring I found a new-born fawn in Trinity Park out in the open where it would be easy prey for an eagle or hawk. It made an

effort to stand when I approached but still wasn't able to get on its feet. I picked it up, cradled it in my arms and it relaxed and cuddled up to me.

As I took it to the tall grass behind the cemetery where the deer bed, Otis, the Shih Tzu that "adopted" the Managing Editor's household was an interested spectator. When I put the fawn down in the tall grass, Otis nudged it gently but didn't bark or act unseemly.

After the ME and his lady had procured and fed the fawn goat's milk, it got up its strength and for a day or two played with Otis. Each time, after playtime the fawn would be taken back to the tall grass and, eventually, its doe found it and took care of it.

We cannot promise that when you visit Otis will have a deer playmate, but the chances are that there will be several deer somewhere on Grindstone Mountain.

Come see for yourself.

— The Trustees' Warden

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## DEATHS

THE REV. DOUGLAS C. BROWN, OHC, 61 in Poughkeepsie, New York. In 1972, he was ordained at St. James' Cathedral, Toronto, where he served as an assistant priest until 1974. He was rector of a three-point parish in Minden, Ontario Canada, from 1974-1977 when he entered the Order of the Holy Cross. He served as guest master at Holy Cross Monastery from 1980 to 1981 and in 1982 was the interim at Trinity Church in Watervliet, New York. Brown made his life profession of vows as a monk of the order on September 8, 1983. In 1998 Brown became the prior of Holy Cross Monastery, West Park, New York. He also served as the assistant superior of the order from 1999 to 2005. He was widely known and respected throughout the church as a spiritual director, teacher, preacher, and retreat leader.

THE RT. REV. WILLIAM (BILL) DAVIDSON, 86, in Love-

land, Colorado. He graduated from Berkeley Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut. He was ordained a priest in 1947 and served several parishes in Montana. In 1956 he joined the staff of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church as associate secretary of the division of town and country work. He held this position until 1962 when he became rector of Grace Church, Jamestown, North Dakota. The House of Bishops elected him Bishop of the Missionary District of Western Kansas in 1965. Presiding Bishop John E. Hines consecrated Davidson on January 6, 1966. The 1970 General Convention approved the Missionary District for diocesan status. At its first diocesan convention in Salina in 1971, the diocese elected Davidson first bishop of Western Kansas. In May 1980, Davidson accepted a position as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Ohio. He retired in July 1986. As a retired bishop, he served as an assisting bishop in the dioceses of Indianapolis, Central

New York, Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Rio Grande, and Colorado.

✠ THE REV. ROBERT R. GIBSON, 98, in Towson, Maryland. Fr. Gibson was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Easton in 1935 and served parishes in Maryland, Connecticut, and Delaware until his retirement in 1978. He subsequently served as chaplain at the retirement community where he resided until the time of his death.

✠ THE REV. CANON EDWARD EVERETT HAILWOOD, 87, in Los Angeles, California. Canon Hailwood was vicar of St. Theodore of Canterbury, Seal Beach, at the time of his death. He received a bachelor of divinity degree from the Episcopal Theological Seminary in 1943, was ordained a deacon in February 1943, and a priest the following August by Arthur W. Moulton, Bishop of Utah. Canon Hailwood served at St. Theodore's since 1995. He was previously chaplain at

the Kensington Episcopal Home from 1982 to 1988 and rector of Trinity Church, Orange – its first rector from 1943-1947 and again from 1971 to 1982. He served several other parishes in the Diocese of Los Angeles from 1947 on. He was secretary of the diocese's department of missions and a member of the Cathedral Corporation, served on the board of managers of The Episcopal Home and the board of trustees of the Church Home for Children, and was chaplain for the Episcopal City Mission Society from 1944 to 1946. He was named an honorary Canon of the Cathedral Center in 2003.

✠ CANON JOYCE HOGG, 66, in New York City, New York. Since the early 1970s Joyce served as a volunteer in various capacities in the Diocese of Long Island, Province II, and on the National Episcopal Church Women's Board. She was President and Treasurer for the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Long Island, a member of Diocesan Council as well as Vice

President and Treasurer of Episcopal Charities in the Diocese. Joyce was an Honorary Canon of the Cathedral of the Incarnation of the Diocese of Long Island and a recipient of the Bishop's Medal for Distinguished Diocesan Service. A member of Episcopal Relief and Development's staff since January 1997, Joyce initially served as the ERD Diocesan Coordinator for the Diocese of Long Island and later as a volunteer on staff. In 1997, she was appointed Director of Networks & Special Projects. She was responsible for recruiting and training ERD's network of volunteers. Joyce attended every General Convention since 1976.

✠ THE REV. TALLY H. JARRETT JR., 83, in Solana Beach, California. He was born in Marietta, Ohio. He served as an officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II and, after ordination in 1949, served at churches in Minnesota and Colorado and as a U.S. Air Force chaplain before coming to Las Vegas. Tally Jarrett served as rector of Christ Church, Las Vegas'

oldest Episcopal Church, from 1959 to 1969. After leaving Las Vegas, he moved to Del Mar, Calif., where he served as rector of St. Peter's until 1987. After retiring, Fr. Jarrett moved to Walnut Creek, Calif., where he served in three consecutive interim positions.

¶ THE REV. CANON CLINTON R. JONES, 89, in Hartford, Connecticut. He graduated from General Theological Seminary in New York and was ordained in the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut in 1941. He joined the clergy staff of Christ Church Cathedral in 1946 and stayed for an unprecedented 40 years, retiring in 1986 when he was named Canon Emeritus. Though technically retired, Canon Jones continued to be an active priest, and since 1990 was part of the Sunday clergy rotation for four churches that comprise the Greater Hartford Regional Ministry. He was also chaplain for the Hartford Chapter of the Guild of St. Barnabas for Nurses.

¶ THE RT. REV. VINCENT PETTIT, 81, in Toms River, New Jersey. He graduated from Philadelphia Divinity School in 1958. He was ordained a priest in 1958 and elected Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of New Jersey in 1984. As a priest, he served in churches throughout the Diocese of New Jersey and on various diocesan committees including the Standing Committee and the Liturgical Commission. Following retirement from the diocese, he served as interim dean of the Cathedral of All Saints in Albany, New York, and then as assisting bishop for the Diocese of Albany for five years. He returned to his home state and served the Diocese of New Jersey for another ten years.

¶ THE REV. EDGAR DUTCHER ROMIG, 84, in Washington, D.C. During World War II he served as a volunteer ambulance driver with the British 8th Army and later as infantryman in the U.S. Army's 12th Armored Division. Wounded in action

during the Battle of the Bulge, he received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He received a master of divinity degree from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge in 1951. He served parishes in Massachusetts until 1964 when he became rector of Church of the Epiphany in downtown Washington, D.C. He was active in the affairs of the Washington Diocese and was a delegate to six General Conventions, serving on the ministry committee during a time of tumult concerning the ordination of women. He retired in 1992.

✠ THE REV. JOHN M. SCOTT, 77, in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He served as priest at St. Mary's Church on the University of Pennsylvania campus for 30 years. Born on Long Island, New York, Fr. Scott graduated from Union College in Schenectady in 1950. He studied at Nashotah House in Wisconsin before becoming a deacon in 1953. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1954 in the Diocese of Long Island and was rector at St. James' in

Long Island from 1954 to 1956 and at All Saints Church in South Charleston, West Virginia, from 1956 to 1962 when he came to St. Mary's. He was an activist during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s and was arrested several times during civil rights and anti-Vietnam War demonstrations.

✠ THE REV. DR. TAYLOR SCOTT IV, 74, in Palm Coast, Florida. He graduated from the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1956 and became Chaplain and Master of Sacred Studies at St. Christopher School for Boys in Richmond. In 1958, he became the assistant rector at Christ Church in Charlotte, North Carolina and in 1961, rector of All Saints Church in Greensboro. From 1965 to 1970, Dr. Scott was an instructor for the Department of Social Studies at North Carolina State University and Chaplain at the University. Beginning in 1970, he was Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Florida. In 1980 he founded the Center for Continuing Education for the Diocese of

North Carolina in Raleigh. He became the Inaugural Director of Academic Affairs at the College of Preachers at the National Cathedral in Washington in 1984. Taylor left Washington to join the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Francis Marion University, where he served until his retirement in 2001.

¶ MABEL CLAQUE SHEPHERD, 86, in Birmingham, Alabama. Mabel Shepherd served the Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama, faithfully for many years as Chair of the Altar Guild. Born in Woodlawn, Alabama, Miss Shepherd attended St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands as a child. She moved her membership to the Church of the Advent as a young woman, 66 years ago. She first served as Altar Guild Chair in 1945, and accepted the position permanently in 1984. A conservative estimate is that Miss Shepherd presided over more than 1000 weddings, 1000 funerals, and 3000 Sunday mornings on the Advent Altar Guild.

¶ THE REV. EDWARD O. WALDRON, 76, in Dorchester, Massachusetts. His book, *Songs With A Message* was a "We Recommend" in the Lent 2006 TAD. Father Waldron served parishes in Georgia, New York, and Trinidad, West Indies before becoming rector of St. Mary's, Dorchester in 1990. St. Mary's is a Boston area church that made a home for new immigrants from some 35 different countries in one of the neighborhoods where they first congregated after arrival in the U.S. He was passionate about welcome and diversity. His music ministry, and his founding of the Angel Band, a children's steel band, changed the lives of many children of the inner city. He refused to be diverted from matters of social justice, multi-racial understanding, and care of souls in the fine tradition of the Oxford Movement, but with a uniquely American flair.

¶ THE RT. REV. JAMES CORTEZ WEST, Sr., 66, in Summerville, South Carolina. He graduated from Claflin University in

1963, from the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in 1966. A fourth generation Reformed Episcopal clergyman, he was ordained a deacon in 1973, presbyter in 1975, and consecrated a bishop in 1984, serving as Bishop of the Diocese of the Southeast of the Reformed Episcopal Church from 1998 until his death. In addition to serving as an educator in the public schools he also served as President and Professor of Theology and Homiletics at Cummins Theological Seminary.

† DR. LILLIAN YEAGER, 62, in Louisville, Kentucky. She served as the Province IV representative on the Executive Council and was a lay member of the Diocese of Kentucky's current General Convention deputation. She was a member of Ovarian Awareness of Kentucky (OAK). She joined Indiana University Southeast, New Albany, Indiana, in 1973 as assistant professor of nursing. She became dean of the School of Nursing in 2002.

She earned an undergraduate degree in nursing education from Tuskegee Institute in 1964, a master's in med-surgical nursing from Wayne State University in 1972 and a doctorate in educational leadership from Louisville's Spalding University in 2000. She was a dedicated mentor and community leader who served on various boards and committees for such well-known institutions as Southern Indiana Rehab Hospital, Frazier Rehab Hospital, Floyd Memorial Hospital's Nursing Department, Home of the Innocents, and KYANNA Black Nurses Association.



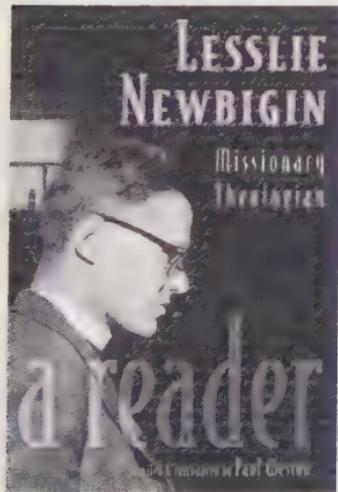
*Rest eternal, grant unto them  
O Lord,  
and let light-perpetual shine  
upon them.  
May they Rest in Peace and  
Rise in Glory.*



# CREAM OF THE CROP



The Anglican Book Club is pleased to offer for the Winter selection, *Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian: A Reader* by Lesslie Newbigin, Paul Weston (compiler).



Lesslie Newbigin's shadow over the theology of mission in the twentieth century remains very large. To run into him is to run into a large obstacle — you cannot go around it, you cannot go over it, you cannot go under it, you must go through it.

To go through Newbigin is to be challenged constantly about our assumptions, our theology, and ourselves. He will not let us off the hook. And where does it all begin?

"All our thinking has to be controlled by our starting point, which is the atonement wrought by Christ for" people and the world (p.79).

*Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian* calls for godly wrestling with a great Christian statesman; the effort will be very fruitful.

— Kendall S. Harmon +

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 And weight four it two say  
 Weather eye am wrong oar  
     write  
 It shows me strait away.

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     maid  
 It nose be fore two long  
 And eye can put the error  
     rite  
 Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem  
     threw it

I am shore your pleased two  
     no  
 Its letter perfect awl the  
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## New Year

I have a godson, Tom, whose birthday falls on New Year's Eve so it always coincides with the turning of the year. Tom has been brought up on a Cornish farm and is therefore more aware than many urban young people of the deep patterns and rhythms of the seasons — the time for sowing, the growth of crops and their harvesting, and the daily round of caring for animals and the milking of his father's dairy cattle.

Tom was confirmed not so long ago, and that means he has an awareness of that other deep rhythm by which time is marked out in the Christian year. That round of feast and fast is a continual reminder of the larger story of our redemption. The secular distortions of that pattern — when Christmas comes in the stores even before Advent has begun and Easter eggs are for sale before Lent has started — are undermining something precious that aids our human growth.

In churches which follow traditional liturgical colors the mood is immediately set when you go into a church and find the red of martyrdom or the Holy Spirit, the purple of penitence, or the white and glorious gold of a great festival.

I once taught a young man from California who was fascinated by what theologians call "typology" — the anticipation of the events of the life of Christ in the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament. The early Christian Fathers, the first teachers of the Church, saw a providential pattern in the anticipation of baptism by the crossing of the Red Sea, and the yes of the Virgin Mary to the calling to become the mother of the Son of God — reversing Eve's disobedience.

This young man told me that he found this understanding of time and history so fascinating because he had been brought up in a country where the sky was always blue, the sun always shone,

in a family without any religious belief, and where one day simply succeeded the next. Without knowing quite why, he sensed that in order to grow as a human being he had to find a shape, a meaning and purpose to his life within a shape and meaning and purpose in history.

Christians have not always kept New Year on January 1 — that was the Roman New Year, and the Church was often very suspicious of it. Only in 1582 did Pope Gregory XIII's reform of the calendar mean that January 1 was generally adopted. Jews kept the New Year at the Feast of the New Moon at the end of September. England began the New Year with the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, and adopted January 1 only in 1752. Germany began with Christmas, and France and the Low Countries with Easter. The Orthodox East keeps New Year's Day on September 1.

But, whatever the history, on New Year's Eve, the turning

of the year, we briefly pause to remind ourselves of past and present, with both penitence and thankfulness for the past, for the year that has gone, and hope for the future. In doing this we are heirs of a Western tradition that has a deep sense that time and history have meaning and purpose, unlike many Eastern religions with cyclical notions of time, and of a need for escape from the endless round of birth, death and rebirth.

Why is this? Because time and space are God's creation, held in being by God, who is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

The cycle of the Christian year gives a Christian meaning to time by taking us year by year deeper into the meaning of the one life through which our lives are transfigured. Advent anticipates. At Christmas Christ comes among us — God-with-us — when, in St. Paul's words, "the fullness of time was come." At Epiphany we see the fulfillment of the

yearning of the non-Jewish world. Lent, Passiontide and Holy Week mark the sacrificial costliness of the Divine Love in a sinful world. Easter and Ascension catch this life, and our lives, to the heavenly places, and Pentecost — the Feast of God-in-us — runs out into the transforming grace which makes men and women saints of God, those stamped and sealed with the likeness of Christ.

It is this pattern which Christians seek to have engraved on their lives when, at the turning of the year, we pause and seek to turn to prayer; the time of our lives, the time that God has given to us.

— The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe

## Epiphany

*Epiphany* comes from a Greek word that means "manifestation" or "showing forth." From the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6 through all the Sundays after that day until Lent, this season is about the manifestation or showing forth of God's glory in Jesus Christ.

We hear of the star in the East leading the wise astrologer-kings to the Christ child. We celebrate Christ's baptism and the divine declaration that Jesus is truly God's beloved Son. John the Baptist identifies Jesus as "The Lamb of God." Andrew tells his brother, Simon Peter, "We have found the Messiah."

Jesus makes repeated invi-

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tations to his would be disciples and other followers to "Come and see." He proclaims, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He teaches the multitudes, giving what we call "The Sermon on the Mount." Finally he is "transfigured" in the sight of Peter, James, and John, and once again God declares, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased."

In countless stories and images, the season of Epiphany is about Jesus being recognized as the beloved Son of God, the one in whom we see the glory of God revealed. This is the time when Jesus is "manifest" as the light of the world. This is a time when the love of God is "shown forth" for all the ages in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

But this season is also about another "e-word." *Epiphany* is about *Evangelism*. "Evangelism" also has its Greek root: *Evangelium* means "Good News." We usually encounter it as "Gospel," the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. "Evangelism" never

actually occurs in scriptures, but we do encounter "Evangelist" as one who proclaims the Good News.

So as we move through this season, we need to remember our position. In countless ways we will encounter Jesus as the Light of the world, the manifestation of God in our lives. But it's not to stop with us! We are called to make the Good News manifest to others through our own loves — what we do, what we say, and how we live.

Yes, this Epiphany you are called to be an evangelist! When we renew our baptismal covenant we promise to "proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ." Epiphany reminds us that the Gospel is not for us alone. We too are called to "show forth" the saving power of God in Christ.

Do it joyfully, powerfully, and unabashedly. Dare to be an evangelist this Epiphany!

— The Rev. Kenneth J.  
Dorsch,  
St. Bartholomew,  
Beaverton, Oregon

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## Letters to TAD

• I am a 90-year-old retired clergy of the United Methodist Church. In the 1980s I was employed in Florida — a retirement community — where THE ANGLICAN DIGEST came to my attention. I have subscribed ever since and look forward to the many items of interest. May God continue to bless your every effort.

— Sincerely, Bernard and Dorothy Rudolph

• I enjoy reading THE ANGLICAN DIGEST and look forward to receive every issue. I am most grateful for your help to those of us in the 3rd world countries. I will not forget your good works.

— God Bless you all, The Rev. Fr. Victor Leon Acquaye (Accra, Ghana)

• I have heard of five loaves and two fishes serving a multitude, but didn't know how to stretch the "two avocados halved" into serving six. [Reference is to 2006 Transfiguration recipe for Shrimp Stuffed Avocados — the recipe should have called for three

avocados rather than two... Mgn Ed] Otherwise, the recipe was delicious.

— Graham Patterson

• My father was an Episcopalian priest in NV, CA, NE, MO, and IN. He passed away and was in THE ANGLICAN DIGEST back in 2000. I get stuff all the time, esp. humorous — like the article in the most recent "Life Lessons from Noah" — which I got a long time ago and forwarded to many on my list! Also get some great cartoons!! Bill Cowger who was on the staff there until he retired and passed away was a friend of ours (my father followed him in Omaha after his tragic event there) — so we have long associations with the Digest — a brick or 2 there!

— Steve Brockmann

## SCHOOL

A little girl had just finished her first week of school. "I'm just wasting my time," she said to her mother. "I can't read, I can't write and they won't let me talk!"

## About the Cover

*Small Cowper Madonna*  
by Raphael. Raphael  
was in Florence from  
late 1504 until 1508,  
the period when  
this painting was  
done. Only a  
few images of  
the Virgin and  
Child from  
those few  
years still  
survive. The  
Cowper family  
held the paint-  
ing for almost  
200 years, donat-  
ing it to the  
National Gallery of  
Art in 1942 at the  
height of the air raids  
over England. With a  
Florentine landscape as  
background, Raphael  
showed a touching moment  
between the Virgin and  
Child. Though neither looks  
at each other they look out  
to the viewer in unity. The  
Holy Mother seems to be  
almost smiling, possibly  
praying, while the Infant  
seems totally at ease with his  
mother.



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## What Is This Word?

John 1.1-14

One of the greatest journalists of the last generation, the late Bernard Levin, described how, when he was a small boy, a great celebrity came to visit his school. The headmaster, thinking perhaps to impress, called the young Levin to the platform in front of the whole school. The celebrity, thinking perhaps to be kind, asked the little boy what he'd had for breakfast.

That was easy, or so it seemed. 'Matzobrei', replied Levin. It's a typical central European Jewish dish, made of egg fried with matzo wafers, brown sugar, and cinnamon; Levin's immigrant mother had continued to make it even after years of living in London. It was, to him, a perfectly ordinary word for a perfectly ordinary meal.

The celebrity, ignorant of such cuisine, thinks he must have misheard; he asks the

question again. Young Bernard, puzzled now and anxious, gives the same answer. The celebrity looks concerned, and glances at the headmaster. What is this word he's saying? The headmaster, adopting a there-there-little-man tone, asks him once more what he had for breakfast. Now dismayed, not knowing what he's done wrong, and wanting to burst into tears, the boy says once more the only thing he can say, since it's the truth: 'Matzobrei'. An exchange of strange glances on the platform, and the now terrified little boy is sent back to his place. The incident is never referred to again, but it stays in his memory as a horrible ordeal.

The Jewish word spoken to an uncomprehending world; the child's word spoken to uncomprehending adults; the word for food of which the others know nothing . . . it all feels very Johannine. What is this Word? 'In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh.' We are so used to it, to the great

cadences, the solemn but glad message of the incarnation; and we risk skipping over the incomprehensibility, the oddness, the almost embarrassing strangeness, of the Word. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness didn't comprehend it; the world was made through him but the world didn't know him; he came to his own, and his own didn't receive him. John is saying two things simultaneously in his Prologue: first, that the incarnation of the eternal Word is the event for which the whole creation has been on tiptoe all along; second, that the whole creation, and even the carefully prepared people of God themselves, are quite unready for this event. Jew and Gentile alike, hearing this strange Word, are casting anxious glances at one another, like the celebrity and the headmaster faced with a little boy telling the truth in a language they don't understand.

That is the puzzle of Christmas. And, to get to its heart, see how it works out in

the rest of John's gospel. John's Prologue is designed to stay in the mind and heart throughout the subsequent story. Never again is Jesus himself referred to as the Word; but we are meant to look at each scene, from the call of the first disciples and the changing of water into wine right through to the confrontation with Pilate and the crucifixion and resurrection, and think to ourselves, this is what it looks like when the Word becomes flesh.

Or, if you like, look at this man of flesh and learn to see the living God. But watch what happens as it all plays out. He comes to his own and his own don't receive him. The light shines in the darkness, and though the darkness can't overcome it it has a jolly good try. He speaks the truth, the plain and simple words, like the little boy saying what he had for breakfast, and Caiaphas and Pilate, uncomprehending, can't decide whether he's mad or wicked or both, and send him off to his fate.

But, though Jesus is never again referred to as the Word of God, we find the theme transposed, with endless variations. The Living Word speaks living words, and the reaction is the same. 'This is a hard word,' say his followers when he tells them that he is the bread come down from heaven (6.60). 'What is this word?', asks the puzzled crowd in Jerusalem (7.36). 'My word finds no place in you,' says Jesus, 'because you can't hear it' (8.37, 43). 'The word I spoke will be their judge on the last day', he insists (12.48) as the crowds reject him and he knows his hour has come. When Pilate hears the word, says John, he is the more afraid, since the word in question is Jesus' reported claim to be the Son of God (19.8). Unless we recognize this strange, dark strand running through the gospel we will domesticate John's masterpiece (just as we're always in danger of domesticating Christmas), and think it's only about comfort and joy, not also about incomprehension and rejection and darkness and denial and stopping the

ears and judgment. Christmas is not about the living God coming to tell us everything's all right. John's gospel isn't about Jesus speaking the truth and everyone saying 'Of course! Why didn't we realize it before?' It is about God shining his clear, bright torch into the darkness of our world, our lives, our hearts, our imaginations, and the darkness not comprehending it. It's about God, God-as-a-little-child, speaking the word of truth, and nobody knowing what he's talking about.



There may be somebody here this morning who is aware of that puzzlement, that incomprehension, that sense of a word being spoken which seems as though it ought to mean something but which remains opaque to you. If that's where you are, the good news is that along with this theme of incomprehension and rejection there goes the parallel theme of people hearing and receiving Jesus' words, believing them and discovering, as he says, that they are spirit and life (6.63), breathing into the dry, dead fabric of our being and producing new life, new birth, new creation. 'As many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, who were born not of human will or flesh, but of God'. 'If you abide in my words, you will know the truth and the truth shall set you free' (8.31f.). 'If anyone keeps my words, that person will never see death' (8.51). 'You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you' (15.3). Don't imagine that the world divides naturally into those

who can understand what Jesus is saying and those who can't. By ourselves, none of us can. Jesus is born into a world where everyone is deaf and blind to him and what he's saying; but some, in fear and trembling, allow his words to challenge, rescue, heal, and transform them. That is what's on offer at Christmas; not a better focused religion for those who already like that sort of thing, but a Word which is incomprehensible in our language but which, when we learn to hear, understand and believe it, will transform our whole selves with its judgment and mercy.

Out of the thousand things which follow directly from this reading of John, I choose three as particularly urgent.

First, John's view of the incarnation, of the Word becoming flesh, strikes at the very root of that liberal denial which characterized mainstream theology thirty years ago and whose long-term

effects are with us still. I grew up hearing lectures and sermons that declared that the idea of God becoming human was a category mistake. No human being could actually be divine; Jesus must therefore have been simply a human being, albeit no doubt (the wonderful patronizing pat on the head of the headmaster to the little boy) a very brilliant one. Phew; that's all right then; he points to God but he isn't actually God. And a generation later, but growing straight out of that school of thought, I have had a clergyman writing to me this week to say that the church doesn't know anything for certain, so what's all the fuss about? Remove the enfleshed and speaking Word from the center of your theology, and gradually the whole thing will unravel until all you're left with is the theological equivalent of the grin on the Cheshire Cat, a relativism whose only moral principle is that there are no moral principles; no words of judgment because nothing is really wrong except saying that things are wrong, no words of

mercy because, if you're all right as you are, you don't need mercy, merely 'affirmation'.

That's where we are right now; and John's Christmas message issues a sharp and timely reminder to re-learn the difference between mercy and affirmation, between a Jesus who both embodies and speaks God's word of judgment and grace and a home-made Jesus (a *Da Vinci Code* Jesus, if you like) who gives us good advice about discover-



from *The Joyful Noiseletter*

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ing who we really are. No wonder John's gospel has been so unfashionable in many circles. There is a fashion in some quarters for speaking about a 'theology of incarnation' and meaning that our task is to discern what God is doing in the world and do it with him. But that is only half the truth, and the wrong half to start with. John's theology of the incarnation is about God's word coming as light into darkness, as a hammer that breaks the rock into pieces, as the fresh word of judgment and mercy. You might as well say that an incarnational missiology is all about discovering what God is saying No to today, and finding out how to say it with him. That was the lesson Barth and Bonhoeffer had to teach in Germany in the 1930s, and it's all too relevant as today's world becomes simultaneously, and at the same points, more liberal and more totalitarian. This Christmas, let's get real, let's get Johannine, and let's listen again to the strange words spoken by the Word made flesh.

Second, John's Prologue by its very structure reaffirms the order of creation at the point where it is being challenged today. John is consciously echoing the first chapter of Genesis: In the beginning God made heaven and earth; in the beginning was the Word. When the Word becomes flesh, heaven and earth are joined together at last, as God always intended. But the creation story which begins with the bipolarity of heaven and earth reaches its climax in the bipolarity of male and female; and when heaven and earth are joined together in Jesus Christ, the glorious intention for the whole creation is unveiled, reaffirming the creation of male and female in God's image. There is something about the enfleshment of the Word, the point in John 1 which stands in parallel to Genesis 1:26-28, which speaks of creation fulfilled; and in that other great Johannine writing, the Book of Revelation, we see what's going on: Jesus Christ has come as the Bridegroom, the one for whom the Bride has been waiting.

Allow that insight to work its way out. Not for nothing does Jesus' first 'sign' transform a wedding from disaster to triumph. Not for nothing do we find a man and a woman at the foot of the cross. The same incipient gnosticism which says that true religion is about 'discovering who we really are' is all too ready to say that 'who we really are' may have nothing much to do with the way we have been physically created as male or female. Christian ethics, you see, is not about stating, or for that matter bending, a few somewhat arbitrary rules. It is about the redemption of God's good world, his wonderful creation, so that it can be the glorious thing it was made to be. This word is strange, even incomprehensible, in today's culture; but if you have ears, then hear it.

out to the front this morning, and speaks to us of the food that he offers us: himself, his own body and blood. It is a hard saying, and those of us who know it well may need to remind ourselves just how hard it is, lest we be dulled by familiarity into supposing that it's easy and undemanding. It isn't. It is the word which judges the world and saves the world, the word now turned into flesh, into matzo, Passover bread, the bread which is the flesh of the Christchild, given for the life of the world because this flesh is the place where the living Word of God has come to dwell. Listen, this morning, for the incomprehensible word the Child speaks to you. Don't patronize it; don't reject it; don't sentimentalize it; learn the language within which it makes sense. And come to the table to enjoy the breakfast, the breakfast that is himself, the Word made flesh, the life which is our life, our light, our glory.

Third, and finally, we return to the meal, the food whose very name is strange, forbidding, even incomprehensible to those outside, but the most natural thing to those who know it. The little child comes

— The Rt. Rev. Dr. N. T. Wright, Bishop of Durham

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*(Please see page 41.)*

## *Ways to Give to the Ministry of Hillspeak*

God gives gifts to his children in order that they might enjoy him and, in sharing their gifts, reveal and build his kingdom. Our first commitment is always to our local parish. We are also called to extend our reach to the ends of the earth. Hillspeak reaches round the world with its ministry of the written word through **THE ANGLICAN DIGEST**, the **Anglican Book Club**, **Operation Pass Along**, and the **Anglican Bookstore** as well as the letters and e-mails that are exchanged daily. The Foland Library serves as a repository for information useful to writers and researchers who come to Hillspeak. Our guest quarters offer refuge for visitors.

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## *Yes, It is Still Christmass*

Much ink has been used and many words spoken of late as to what to do about 25 December. It is a Christian Holy Day, along with many others including Sunday, as a matter of fact. Yes, we are a multi-cultural society with no state sponsored or supported religion. Freedom of religion is the rule up to a point I suppose — no human sacrifices, please.

If it were not for merchandisers pushing the sale of Christmas gifts (a rather recent custom and entirely unnecessary) beginning at Thanksgiving (a Puritan religious day), the temperature might be a bit lower. Christians could simply celebrate the nativity of their Lord at Mass and in the family.

I long have suggested (with no takers) that the Christian Churches move the Nativity celebration to 6 January, the Epiphany, much like the Orthodox. The secular world could have their Holiday Season (what season would it be?) and there would be no

conflict with the Christian celebration.

“Happy Holiday.” Another difficulty, since *holiday* comes from the word *holy day*. If this were too widely known, it would put off not only secularists but also many evangelical Christians who don’t celebrate holy days (a Papist invention!). Actually, the date 25 December is a Papist invention too (AD 336), since there is no recorded date for the birth of our Lord. Furthermore, the Feast of the Nativity (Christmas) was not really celebrated early in our nation’s history by any church other than the Episcopal or Roman Catholic churches! Adding to that startling observation, it should be noted that the word Christmas comes from the words, Christ’s Mass.

Setting confusion and contradiction aside, let us who claim Jesus as Lord celebrate and enjoy the Holy Day of Christmass (Epiphany and other holy days no less).

The Rt. Rev. H. W. Shipps,  
via *Spiritus Gladius*,  
St. Paul’s, Savannah, Georgia

## Editorial Policy

From its foundation by the Rev. Howard L. Foland in 1958, THE ANGLICAN DIGEST has sought to reflect "the words and work of the faithful throughout the Anglican Communion" and, in that respect, has proudly and consistently supported the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church. TAD always has been supported by its loyal readers; it is utterly independent of any convention, arm, or agency of the Church. Independent, except, of course, for its loyalty to the orthodox Catholic faith as received by Anglicanism. It is a traditional, but not reactionary, voice in the Church.

While its own approach is moderately Catholic (or to use an old term, "Prayer Book Catholic"), it is open to the needs and accomplishments of all expressions of Anglicanism: Anglo-Catholic, Broad, Evangelical. Its "market" is the whole Church, clergy and lay, those highly theologically educat-

ed and "babes in Christ." So the material in each issue is a mixture of themes for a varied audience, including ministry ideas for clergy and laity, devotional and historical material, as well as humor and news briefs from around the Anglican Communion.

- *The Editor*

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*From the Editor...**What Kind Of Bishops  
Should The Church Seek?*

What should one look for when he or she considers someone as a possible bishop? Since my diocese has been recently involved in an Episcopal election, this query has been center stage. Titus 1 moves us toward an answer.

One theme is personal holiness. The person "must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain," for example. These are quite internal and personal qualities that are not often noticed, much less valued, in our superficial, image-based culture. How many search committees for bishop do you know who consider a persons' attitude to money as part of the process?

Having a firm grip on apostolic Christianity is vital. The prospective Episcopal candidate "must hold firm to the sure word as taught." He needs to know the apostolic message, understand it, grasp it and not hold it loosely or let it go. There is something

more. The person should "be able to give instruction in sound doctrine." How do we know what is sound? It is all captured in that beautiful two word phrase "as taught." It is not just any apostolic word it is the one taught by the original apostles; we are to pass on what they passed on faithfully to the earliest church. As Saint Paul puts it "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received" (1 Corinthians 15:3).

Those two qualities are sobering enough, but there is yet something more. The candidate should also be able "to confute those who contradict" the sure word as taught. A good bishop can recognize heresy and false teaching, explain what the incorrect teachings are fairly on their own terms, and then show them to be wrong through a clear counterargument.

May the Lord give us more bishops who are personally holy, teachers of apostolic doctrine, and confuters of false teaching as we go forward into the twenty-first century.

- KSH+

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